

Washington State hatchery reform language as it appears in consolidated appropriations act for FY 2000

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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19. The funding for Washington State hatchery improvement activities is to support this new program as follows: The \$3,600,000 provided for hatchery reform in Washington State should be deposited with the Washington State Interagency Council for Outdoor Recreation. The director of the Interagency Council for Outdoor Recreation shall ensure these funds are expended as specified in the report of May 7, 1999, titled, 'The Reform of Salmon and Steelhead Hatcheries in Puget Sound and Coastal Washington to Recover Natural Stocks While Providing Fisheries', and at the direction of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (as discussed below).

Funds should be used for the improvement of hatcheries in the Puget Sound area and other coastal communities as follows: (1) \$300,000 for activities associated with the Hatchery Scientific Review Group which will work with agencies to produce guidelines and recommended actions and ensure that the goals of hatchery reform are carried out, identify scientific needs, and make recommendations on further experimentation; (2) \$800,000 for agencies and tribes to establish a team of scientists to generate and maintain data bases, analyze existing data, determine and undertake needed experiments, purchase scientific equipment, develop technical support infrastructures, initiate changes to the hatcheries based on their findings and establish a science-based decision making process; (3) \$1,400,000 to improve hatchery management practices to augment fisheries, protect genetic resources, avoid negative ecological interaction between wild and hatchery fish, promote recovery of naturally spawning populations, and employ new rearing protocols to improve survival and operational efficiencies; (4) \$900,000 to conduct scientific research evaluating hatchery management operations; and (5) \$200,000 to Long Live the Kings to facilitate co-managers' design and implementation of Puget Sound hatchery reform.

A leading group of scientists representing Federal, State, and tribal agencies has been meeting for the past year to discuss the role of fish hatcheries in the Pacific Northwest. The listing of over 10 salmon species in the Columbia River over the past decade and the most recent listing of 3 salmon species in other parts of the State have led many in the Northwest to question and challenge the role of fish hatcheries in the recovery of the listed wild salmon stocks.

Hatcheries can play a positive role in salmon management and the recovery of wild salmon stocks. Scientists are testing ways hatcheries can be retrofitted and managed to provide hatchery stocks to maintain a vibrant fishery in the Pacific Northwest without significantly impacting precious wild stocks.

The efforts of the advisory team that has established a framework designed to guide an effort to reform more than 100 State, tribal, Federal, and private hatcheries in Puget Sound and the

Washington coast are commended. Many watersheds on the west coast of Washington have multiple hatcheries run by different agencies and tribes. Hatchery operations must be coordinated within logical geographical management units. There must be a coordinated effort among all levels of government to obtain the positive results expected by hatchery management reform. The framework outlined by the advisory committee should be implemented at hatcheries in Puget Sound and the west coast of Washington.

There is to be established a Hatchery Scientific Review Group which will serve as an independent panel. It should comprise five independent scientists selected by the advisory team from a pool of nine candidates nominated by the American Fisheries Society and four agency representatives; one each designated by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Each of these designees should have technical skills in relevant fields such as fish biology or fish genetics. All appointments should be made no later than 30 days after enactment of this Act. The members of the group maybe compensated for time and travel through this appropriation. The chair of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group should be one of the independent scientists chosen from the American Fisheries Society nominations and should be selected by the group itself. Hereafter, when an independent scientist on the group steps down, a replacement should be selected by the group from a list of three nominees provided by the American Fisheries Society.

The Hatchery Scientific Review Group should report to Congress by June 1, 2000, on progress made and work remaining in reforming Puget Sound hatcheries. Long Live the Kinds should report to Congress by June 1, 2000, on its progress.